



Fact Sheet

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control • www.scdhec.gov

Scabies

What is scabies ?	Scabies is an infestation of the skin with the microscopic mite <i>Sarcoptes scabiei</i> . Scabies is very common. It is found worldwide, and affects people of all races and social classes. Scabies spreads rapidly under crowded conditions where there is frequent skin-to-skin contact between people, such as in hospitals, institutions, child-care facilities, and nursing homes.
What are the symptoms?	Pimple-like irritations, burrows or rash of the skin, especially the webbing between the fingers; the skin folds on the wrist, elbow, or knee; the penis, the breast, or shoulder blades is the most frequent symptom. Other symptoms might be intense itching, especially at night and over most of the body and sores on the body caused by scratching. These sores can sometimes become infected with bacteria. Itching may continue for 2-3 weeks, and does not mean that you are still infested.
How is scabies treated?	Several lotions are available to treat scabies. Always follow the directions provided by your physician or the directions on the package insert. Apply lotion to a clean body from the neck down to the toes and leave on overnight (8 hours). After 8 hours, take a bath or shower to wash off the lotion. Put on clean clothes. All clothes, bedding, and towels used by an infested person 2 days before treatment should be washed in hot water and dried in a hot dryer. A second treatment of the body with the same lotion may be necessary 7-10 days later. Your doctor may prescribe additional medication to relieve itching if it is severe. No new burrows or rashes should appear 24-48 hours after effective treatment.
How do people catch this disease?	<p>Scabies is spread by direct, prolonged, skin-to-skin contact with a person already infested with scabies. Contact must be prolonged (a quick handshake or hug will usually not spread infestation). Infestation is easily spread to sexual partners and household members. Infestation may also occur by sharing clothing, towels, and bedding.</p> <p>You cannot get scabies from pets. Animals can become infested with another mite and get a condition called mange. However, the mite that causes mange in animals is not a cause for alarm in people.</p>
What can be done to stop the spread of this disease?	<p>Avoiding close skin-to-skin contact with someone who has scabies, as well as with their personal items, will help you avoid getting scabies. People who have scabies are encouraged to use care to avoid spreading the mites to others.</p> <p>The scabies mite can live up to 4 days without human body contact, which means that scabies can also be spread by contact with clothes, bed linens, and household articles..</p>

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

Region 7

Serving Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties

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